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November 8, 2005

Representative Greg Walden  
1210 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Walden,

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association is writing to provide our full support of your recently introduced legislation to expedite the rehabilitation of our federal forests after catastrophic events such as wildfires, hurricanes, and windstorms. HR 4200, The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, is a commonsense solution to an escalating problem with western federal forestlands.

Costly environmental lawsuits continuously degrade the value of wood available for sale after a catastrophic event. Rural communities throughout the country have been held hostage by many of these lawsuits and as a result are losing their economic base. Waiting for three or more years to harvest dead or dying trees caused by a wildfire is unacceptable as the wood continues to lose all commercial value.

Rural Oregon communities have incessantly been harmed by environmental organizations promoting preservation rather than utilization. Many Oregon towns are on the brink of economic collapse and this bill will be a step in the right direction towards conserving our remaining natural resource based economies.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association thanks you for your tireless work on natural resource based issues that have a tremendous impact on the rural Oregon way of life.

Sincerely

Kevin Westfall  
Director of Governmental Affairs